

REMARKS

I. Status Of Claims

Claims 1-6 are pending.

Claims 1-6 are rejected.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended and a new claim 7 has been added.

The Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner found the originally filed claims contain allowable subject matter.

II. Amendment to the Specification

The specification at page 6, lines 15-19 has been amended to clarify the description of the recess formed in the first insulating layer (7). This amendment is consistent with the Figures 7, 8, and 8A. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention.

In response, claims 1 and 2 have been amended to more clearly and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 112 and remove the ambiguities noted by the Examiner.

Regarding claim 1, the phrase in lines 13-17 of the originally filed claim 1 has been amended to now read:

opening first windows and second strip-shaped windows in the second metallization level and in the second insulating layer, the second windows having an internal contour and an external contour, wherein the first windows correspond to the contour of the first openings and the external contour of the second windows corresponds to the internal contour of the second openings;

The amended phrase is clear that the "opening" step is directed to both the first windows and the second windows.

In addition, the phrase in lines 18-19 of the originally filed claim 1 has been amended to now read: "forming third windows, larger than the first windows, in the masking layer;" The amended phrase is clear that the "forming" step is directed to forming a third windows in the masking layer. Preceding this phrase, a new claim limitation "depositing a masking layer filling the second strip-shaped windows;" has been added in claim 1 to provide an antecedent basis for the masking layer.

Furthermore, additional amendments have been made to claims 1 and 2 to correct the grammatical and idiomatic errors noted by the Examiner and to conform the claims with current U.S. practice. The amendments presented herein are fully supported by the originally filed specification and no new matter has been added.

IV. New Claims

New claim 7 has been added to claim different aspects of the present invention. The support for the subject matter of the new claim 7 can be found, for example, in the originally filed specification on page 6, lines 6-19 and Figures 7, 8, and 8A.

V. Summary

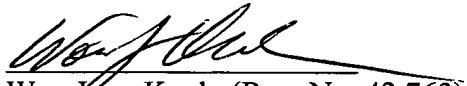
The Applicant believes that all outstanding issues have been addressed and the pending claims 1-7 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

A fee for three months extension of time is enclosed herewith. Please charge any additional fee that may be due to Duane Morris **Deposit Account No. 50-2061**.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

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Enclosures

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